

**From:** Ernie  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 12/14/01 12:55pm  
**Subject:** microsoft anti trust trial

Hello,

I was recently informed by a news web site i frequently visit that public comments were now being taken about the Microsoft trial, and the punishments, if any, they will face. Although I realize one voice may be lost in the shouts of millions of others, I felt that I had to respond, to at least show my support for some sort of major punishment for Microsoft.

I am a user of Free Software. I run Linux, and OpenBSD, both of which are Freely available, and Open, operating systems. Many people around the world use software like this, and I won't bore you with the reasons. With microsoft in control, free programs and operating systems such as the ones I use, and the many others in use around the world, will have a harder and harder time communicating with those who choose (or had chosen for them) Microsoft's Windows Operating Systems.

Microsoft has continually done things to promote anti-competative behavoir. They have changed their networking protocols, their .DOC word file format, and even the format of their file system from release to release. Although their may be technical reasons behind their changes, you would never be able to get that information from them. All of this is shrowded in mystery, as is their right as a private company, and yet Windows and MS Office are the most widely used pieces of software around. Yet only Windows can read and write the the doc format with 100% compatability, forcing you to use Office, and a Windows based machine. If you want to network with Windows, you are forced to use their ever changing network protocols, and so on.

It is with much doubt and trepadation I look forward to the coming months, and with it, Microsoft's ultimate fate. I feel that punishments need to be put in place, punishments that will foster competition in the technical market, and allow Microsoft to no longer maintain the stranglehold they have now.

At a minimum, I feel:

Microsoft should have to publish the format of its Microsoft Office suite. This will allow open communications between users of differing operating systems, regardless of the program they use.

OEM computer vendors should be allowed to change and modify the Windows desktop as they see fit, and Microsoft should no longer be allowed to 'strong-arm' those vendors into installing, and only installing, its Windows operating system. Windows XP does not need to be any better or different than its predecessors for it to become to standard. New

computers will simply come with it pre-installed, and the consumer will not have a choice.

Microsoft's networking protocols must be published IN FULL, and approved by an independent body, such as the IETF.

I have no problem with Microsoft also donating large sums of money to the poorer school system around the world, education is very important; But, to allow them to simply further their dominance by letting them flood the school systems with their own software is insane. That will simply increase their dominance, and the cost to them will be minimal. In fact, it's really more of a benefit for them, than anything. They should simply donate cash, and let the schools have the choice that a consumer walking into his local computer store does not have (the choice of not getting a computer with Windows).

I hope my comments will be taken seriously. Microsoft, which started as small as any company, has grown exponentially since. They seem to not represent the ideals that founded this country: Openness, fairness, and a willingness to cooperate.

Ernie Cline